

*“Why do I yearn for a place I’ve never been?
Miss those I’ve never met?
Long for a home that never existed?”*

Of all my children, Liv was... different.

The sun always shone brightly over Friol. The sky opened up in an immense reflection of the ocean, blue like no other. The fresh sea breeze swayed the trees and the flowers, splashing the scenery with color, and the Spirits were either sunbathing or pulling jests on one another.

However, it was this same paradise that bored Liv. For her, every day was the exact same. And that day gave no signs of being any different from the rest...

...

Not too far away from the shoreline, Liv was sleeping on a palm tree. The sun had already peaked at the summit of its traversal and the heat started to become a nuisance for the young spirit. Perhaps taking a dip into the sea would refresh her, relieving her senses, but sometimes the blazing sun can make it difficult to move from a comfortable position...

...So I laid her a hand.

-What the!?- she yelled, startled, after I made a coconut that was dangling oh-so conveniently over her head drop gently.

-Fine, Palm, I'm up...- groaned Liv, after realizing who the culprit was. It was not difficult to find out, as I was laughing from a distance.

As Liv returned her hooves to the sandy earth, she began dragging herself towards the waves. Sleeping was what she did most of the time. Not because of laziness, but because it was her best way to cope with the boredom and stillness the forest of Friol was known to her for.

As the water made contact with her legs, she felt an immense relief. The refreshing breeze washed away the heat from her body as she sighed deeply, eyes closed. She extended her arms openly, stretching and releasing a groan of pleasure.

Standing on the northern island of the Archipelago of Friol, known as the Primeval Recess, she could see almost all the islands from there, peeking over the horizon. The other spirits usually would hang around the main island, but there were also those who rather enjoyed a little bit of quiet, like Liv did.

-Finally awake, eh?- a voice could be heard, right next to Liv. She looked around, confused, but there was no one in sight.

All of a sudden, the sand right behind her began shaking and ascending abruptly, revealing a creature twice her size. Liv retreated, agitated and clumsily, towards the water, until a wave knocked her off balance.

-Ha ha ha! Got ya this time!- laughed the creature. It was one of the crabs that lived together with the Spirits, known as Karbids. His shell was covered in glittering sand, smooth rocks and other shiny objects he happened to find laying around.

Liv sighed, face down, as the waves kept crashing gently on her back.

-You have to step up your game, Liv! You make it too easy!- he proclaimed proudly. His voice was quite juvenile, something that would not go along with his size. The crabs from Friol can grow as big as a small mountain, so he was still very young.

-Hello, Kal... how are you?- asked Liv. She knew her friend was having a good time, so she would rather not ruin it by confessing she was quite angry about that situation.

-Sorry if I scared you, Liv- he apologized, extending one of his pincers to the spirit. Liv accepted and Kal helped her stand on her hooves.

-It's fine, really... -she sighed. -How did you know I would be standing right here?- she asked, thinking of how well prepared Kal was for the scare.

-Well, sometimes the Spirit Palm itself shares its secrets with us...- Kal described mysteriously.

-For how long have you been waiting there?- Liv asked harshly, knowing he was bluffing.

-...I would rather not answer that...- he mumbled nervously, looking to the side.

Hours. He had been waiting for hours. Quite the patient crab, If I say so myself. And I am a Tree.

The pair decided to move to the main island. As Kal was swimming, Liv laid on his back, gazing at the clouds that were timidly scattered across the immense sky.

-Kal... have you ever wondered... if there's something else?- wondered the spirit.

-...Else to what?- asked the crab, but he already knew where this conversation was headed.

-To our forest. Like... is there something beyond... or is our world an endless ocean?- she said, lifting her hand upwards.

-I don't know Liv... I couldn't answer that- he responded, doubtful.

-But maybe the Tree could, right?- she asked, turning herself over and looking forwards, trying to meet the crab's eyes.

-Listen, Liv... why are you so eager to abandon this place?- asked the crab, worried. The spirit sighed.

-I am bored of this, Kal... Sometimes I feel I was born from a different Tree- she confessed, resting her head on her arms and looking to the horizon, longingly.

-And... Do you want to abandon me, too?-

-No! I never said that!- she replied abruptly.

Both remained silent for a few moments. Liv, because she did not know how to follow. Kal, because he already knew the answer.

-You know I have to stay, Liv. This is where I belong... and I do like it here as well- he said. He was trying to convince his friend to not tie herself to a place she did not enjoy being in.

-...-

-But... if a choice is given to you... take it. Do what you truly desire- he encouraged.

-...Kal...- said Liv, feeling guilty to even suggest she would leave her best friend behind.

-Worry not, friend. I'm sure that your heart won't leave you astray. I know!- he said, cheerfully.

She could not sleep that night.

Submerged in complete silence, the only sound that could be heard was the continued murmur of the waves reaching into the shore in such a gentle movement, that it would seem like the sea was caressing the land.

And there she stood, knees deep into the water. She wanted to leave, she had a desire to abandon that place. And yet, the waves kept pushing her back into the land, time after time.

The sky was littered with countless stars, glimmering and beating like hearts of silver. Liv's eyes became the host of those stars, her black eyes shining with the light of the nocturnal heavens.

She had been there many times before. And every single time, the outcome was the same.

But she kept trying.

She began to run into the sea, splashing the water and trying to force her way into the crashing waves, that seemed to grow stronger at each step she dared to venture into the unknown. She launched herself, now underneath the surface, and began to swim.

Now only a few seconds into the sea, she looked up to the surface from underneath.

"Jump... higher..." she thought to herself.

Gathering all her strength, she dashed upwards, until she emerged from the surface with great force. Her body was twisting as she rose up into the air. The water around her was spiraling, reflecting the light of her body, forming waves of shining reflections of light that ascended by her side.

And as she water dashed and ascended, higher than any other Friol spirit could, she kept her gaze into the stars. For a brief moment, she felt that relieving feeling of not being imprisoned. Even if she knew what would happen afterwards, she kept trying, time and time again, only to experience, albeit for a fleeting moment, that very emotion she yearned for.

"Maybe... if I jump high enough... I'll be free. I'll get to see what lies beyond. If only I could... jump higher..."

However, as she kept losing momentum, the sadness took hold of her again. Unable to fight the invisible pull that bound her into the earth, she fell into the sea hence she emerged from.

As she was sinking deep into the water, her eyes were still searching for the stars. Their light became blurred, becoming indistinguishable dots from beneath the surface. Her own light began to dim, and this thought rushed her mind, always the same.

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-...-

-...Liv?-

-...-

-Liv!-

-W-what?-

-We’re here. You can come down, if you want-

They arrived at their destination a few minutes ago. Kal was waiting for Liv to do something, but her mind was somewhere else.

-Sorry, I was... absorbed in thought...-

-I know. It happens everytime you stare at the clouds- laughed serenely the crab.

There were many other spirits around them. Some were just relaxing under the sun, chasing each other or sitting underneath the palm trees. There were other spirits who were out in the water catching fish, chasing them in a frantic dance of watery twirls and twists.